

Saving Electricity at Home



Seattle City Light

Tips for Home Owners

www.seattle.gov/light/conserve

Conservation has been Seattle City Light's favorite energy resource since 1977. The energy savings realized from our nationally recognized programs prove it's a wise choice. For the past 25 years we've seen it in our bottom line, and you can see it in yours.

Conservation is also one of the most effective ways we can reduce carbon emissions which are the primary cause of accelerated global warming. While Seattle City Light gets most of its power from clean, renewable hydro, some power comes from fossil fuel sources, major contributors to carbon emissions. By conserving, we reduce global warming impacts locally by needing less supplemental fossil fuel-generated power in winter, and regionally by selling our surplus hydro power in the summer to reduce another utility's need for fossil fuel-generated power.

There are hundreds of ways, large and small, to conserve electricity. Most of it is common sense, but some of it may surprise you. In this brochure, we concentrate on behavioral changes and low-cost fixes you can easily do yourself.



Keep Your Body Warm in Winter

- Dressing warmer when the days get colder is less expensive and more efficient than turning up your thermostat.
- Wear layers of lightweight and loose-fitting clothes. It's usually warmer than wearing one heavy, bulky jacket.
- Wool garments are best for keeping in body heat. Shirts and sweaters with close-fitting necks and long sleeves are also good.
- Keep a lap blanket or quilt on the couch to stay warm while reading or watching TV.
- Before turning up the thermostat, turn on the kettle. Drinking something hot really does help warm you up.





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Keep Yourself Cozy on Cold Winter Nights

- Using an electric mattress pad or blanket is cheaper than heating your entire bedroom – be sure to follow the manufacturer's precautions. Sometimes it's enough to just preheat your bed before you get in it.
- Use flannel sheets, a down comforter, or a plump fiberfill comforter.
- Sheepskin mattress pads keep you warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.
- A hot water bottle can also be used to warm your bed before you get in it.
- For late-night reading, wear a warm sweater or bed-jacket.

Make Your Electric Heat Go Further

- If you have electric heat, it accounts for about half your electric bill during the heating season. The best way to save is to turn down your thermostat.
- For every degree you turn down your thermostat, your bill will drop 2-5%. Set your thermostat at 65-68° F when you are home, and 55° F (or off) at night or when you're not home. If you're used to high temperatures, try turning down your thermostat by just 2 degrees. It's easier to get used to than a 5- or 10-degree change.
- If you have zone heating (baseboards, wall-fans or wood stoves), heat only the room you are in. Keep doors closed or put a blanket across openings that have no doors.



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- Put a thermometer next to your thermostat. Don't rely on the "Comfort Zone" setting to establish temperature; it could be as much as 10 degrees too hot or too cold.
- Older baseboard heater thermostats create very high swings in temperature and are notoriously inaccurate. Invest in a new baseboard thermostat that can hold a steady temperature.
- All heating systems function best when properly maintained. Keep furniture, drapes and curtains at least 24" from all baseboard heaters for proper air circulation and safety.
- For baseboard heaters under windows, use deflectors to steer heat into the room and away from the windows or behind the drapes. Be sure the deflectors are approved for use with baseboard heaters.
- Vacuum dust and debris from baseboard heater fins before each heating season.
- Remove covers from wall fan heaters and vacuum dust and debris from the heating units.
- Change furnace filters at least once a month during the heating season.
- Portable heaters can save you money only if you use them to heat small areas for short periods of time in place of your furnace. For example, using a portable heater to heat your breakfast nook may be cheaper than heating the whole house or apartment before you go to work. Be sure to turn it off when you no longer need it.
- Do not use your oven to heat your home. It is inefficient and costly. But if baking on a cool day, it's fine to leave the oven door open after the food is cooked and the oven has been turned off.
- **Caution: Never use kerosene heaters in unventilated areas.**
- **Caution: Never use portable heaters near curtains, drapes, clothes, electric cords, furniture or wet areas such as sinks or bathrooms.**
- **Caution: Keep all children away from portable heaters!**
- **Caution: It is not a good idea to completely close off a room to heat by shutting heat ducts. You could encourage mold and mildew growth. Instead, keep ducts partially open.**



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Cool Your Hot Water Costs

- Install an energy-efficient showerhead. It will reduce flow without cutting water pressure.
- Fix dripping faucets.
- Reduce shower time. Even a couple minutes per shower really add up.
- Set both thermostats on your water heater to no more than 120° F.

It's Cool to Save Energy

- Let foods cool to room temperature before putting them in the refrigerator.
- Dust refrigerator coils at least once a year.
- Replace loose refrigerator gaskets. If you can easily pull a piece of paper out from between the gasket and the refrigerator when the door is closed, get a new gasket.
- A freezer is more efficient when it's packed full of food.
- Defrost the freezer whenever more than 1/4" of ice builds up.
- Recycle your second refrigerator if you don't really need it. You could save up to \$75 per year on your electric bill.

Cook Up Some Savings

- Use a toaster or small toaster oven (not the oven) to toast bread.
- Cover pots tightly to reduce cooking time.
- Match the pot size to the burner size of your range.
- Don't open oven door unless necessary. The temperature can drop by as much as 25° F.
- Preheat the oven only when called for. It's not necessary for most baking or cooking.
- A microwave oven uses half as much electricity as a standard oven.
- Always use the kitchen exhaust fan when boiling, frying or cooking on the range. Too much moisture condensation encourages mold and mildew growth.
- Keep the fan grease-free for the most efficient operation.





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Savings with a Twist

- Switch to compact fluorescent (CF) light bulbs. They last 10 times longer and use 2/3 less energy than regular bulbs. (A 15-watt CF bulb gives about the same light as a 60-watt regular bulb.) CF bulbs are best used in hard-to-reach areas, porch fixtures and lights that are on for more than 3 hours per day.
- Look for CF bulbs that have the EnergyStar® label for your assurance of quality.

For more information, call our Conservation Help Line at **(206) 684-3800**, (Monday - Friday, 8:15 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.) or visit our web site at www.seattle.gov/light/conserves/resident.

Clean Up on Energy Savings

- Run full loads when using your dishwasher.
- If you must pre-rinse your dishes, use cold water.
- Select the air-dry option on your dishwasher.
- Use cold water to run your garbage disposal.
- For clothes washing, select the cold water setting for both the wash and rinse cycles. Most clothes will get clean in cold water, especially if you use a detergent made for cold water washing.
- Run your dryer with a full load. For most efficient operation, clean the lint trap before each use.
- If you have a hot tub, an insulated cover is not enough. Add a bubble cover that installs right on top of the water.
- Add a timer to automatically turn your hot tub on only when you use it.
- If you need a new clothes washer, buy a WashWise certified model and get up to a \$100 rebate.



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Other Conservation Resources

- For a list of conservation recommendations customized to your home, you can fill out our free Home Resource Profile survey at www.seattle.gov/conserve/homeprofile
- In seconds, you'll get back a profile of how your home uses electricity and water, how your resource use compares with other homes, and areas where you can save. (You need your Seattle City Light or Seattle Public Utilities account number, and at least 10 months at the same address.)
- If you are interested in how to check your home for air leaks and insulation, ask for our free 12-page booklet, Do-It-Yourself Home Energy Audit, a step-by-step guide for identifying and improving your home's energy efficiency. Call us at **(206) 684-3800** or go to www.seattle.gov/light/conserve/resident to order your copy.
- If you are interested in a comprehensive guide to saving energy at home plus lists of efficient appliances and technical information, you can purchase for \$8.95 a 223-page book called Consumer Guide to Home Energy Savings published by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. They can be ordered from **(202) 429-8873** or www.aceee.org



Imagine

what we can **save** together

City Light Programs & Information

The logo consists of the letters 'FPO' in a bold, pink, sans-serif font. It is positioned in the top right corner of the page, overlapping a blue background image of a hand holding a pen.

Payment Assistance

Discounted Utility Rates

(206) 684-0268

For low to moderate income Seattle City Light customers including seniors and disabled.

Federal Energy Assistance

Eligibility based on income. Customers who live:

Seattle City Limits **(206) 328-2356**

North of Seattle **(425) 869-6027**

South of Seattle **(253) 874-4328**

Emergency Low-Income Energy Assistance (ELIA)

(206) 684-3688

One-time emergency bill payment assistance.

Project Share

(206) 684-3000 or **1-800-862-1181**

Emergency bill payment assistance for low income customers.

Payment Options

Budget Billing Plan

(206) 684-3345

(Formerly the Average Payment Plan) Spreads your electricity charges equally throughout a 12-month period. No income guidelines or extra charges.

Automatic Bank Payment

(206) 733-9100

Automatically deducts your utility bill amount from your bank account.

Payment Arrangements

(206) 684-3000

Call us if you are unable to pay the full amount of your bill by the due date. Do not wait for an electricity shut-off notice and avoid late fees and penalties. We will work with you to set up a payment plan.



CITY LIGHT

Seattle City Light's Conservation Publications:

- Air Quality in the Home
- Do-It-Yourself Home Energy Audit
- Electric Appliances – Typical Energy Costs
- Energy Conservation Services
- Energy Saving Tips for Small Business Customers
- The Home Lighting Guide
- How to Get the Most from Your Electric Heat
- Purchasing a Heat Pump
- Saving Electricity at Home for Home Owners
- Saving Electricity at Home for Renters
- Why Are My Bills So High?

These publications and more conservation information can be found on our web site:

seattle.gov/light/conserve/resident



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(206) 684-3800



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Seattle Climate Action



SeattleCAN.org

www.seattle.gov/light/conserve